

Metro DC PFLAG Montgomery County At-Large BOE Candidate Questionnaire Answers

In recent years, the Montgomery County Public Schools system (MCPS) has made great progress with respect to LGBTQ matters. MCPS policy, of course, is set by the Montgomery County Board of Education. Below is the Questionnaire that the Metro DC Chapter of PFLAG sent to all 2020 candidates for the Board of Education. Scroll down for the answers provided by the At-Large Candidates. For those seeking more context, I suggest checking out the links provided in the Questionnaire itself.

The following candidates (in alphabetical order) provided their answers in March: Sunil Dasgupta, Paul Geller, Lynne Harris, Dalbin Osorio, Cameron Rhode, and Lumpoange Thomas. Candidate Jay Guan submitted his answers on May 9.

NOTE: In the June 2 primary election, the top two voter-getters move on to the general election in November. (Answers from the District candidates may be found at <https://davidfishback.blogspot.com/2020/03/metro-dc-pflag-montgomery-county.html>)

David S. Fishback, Co-Chair for Maryland Advocacy
Metro DC Chapter of PFLAG

March 1, 2020

Dear XXXX:

For many years, the Metro DC Chapter of PFLAG has worked cooperatively with MCPS and the Board of Education to work foster a positive environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, and Gender Non-Conforming students.

In order to inform our members and supporters of the viewpoints of the candidates running to serve on the Board of Education, we respectfully request that you answer the four brief questions pasted below. In order to provide a context, we include background materials. As a 501(c)(3) organization, we will not be endorsing candidates for office, but we will pass along your answers, and anything else you would like to let us know, to our members and supporters.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

We would appreciate your response no later than March 15, 2020.

1. HEALTH EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Background

The secondary school Family Life and Human Sexuality curriculum (which is

an “opt-in” section of the health education curriculum) provides that with respect to matters of sexual orientation and gender identity, the lessons are not “scripted” (as they were prior to 2014), but rather that “instructional planning resources [are] developed similar to all other content areas, including sample learning tasks, suggested instructional resources, and teacher guidance (e.g., the American Psychological Association’s *Answers to Your Questions for a Better Understanding of Sexual Orientation & Homosexuality*, available at <http://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/orientation.pdf>. This shift permits teachers to plan instruction based on the specific needs of their students, as they do in all other content areas.” See [https://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/9JVRVT6D30ED/\\$file/6%201%20Sec%20Health%20Ed%20Curr%20Framework.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/9JVRVT6D30ED/$file/6%201%20Sec%20Health%20Ed%20Curr%20Framework.pdf) (pp. 5-6), adopted by the Board of Education on June 17, 2014.

Question

What is your position on the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum?

2. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Background

MCPS guidelines and regulations make it very clear that the Board of Education “expects all students and staff to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect without regard to an individual’s actual or perceived personal characteristics, such as . . . gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, [and] family/parental status.”

See, for example, *A Student’s Guide to Rights and Responsibilities*, 2019-20

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/students/rights/1318%2019>

[_StudentRightsAndResponsibilities_Web.pdf](#) and *Employee Code of Conduct*, 2019-20

https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/staff/Employee_Code_of_Conduct/0002%2020_EmployeeCodeofConduct_BOOKLET_ENG_8%205x11.pdf

With respect to gender identity and expression, MCPS provides specific Guidelines.

See *Guidelines Regarding Student Gender Identity Matters*

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/students/rights/1243%2019>

[GenderIdentityGuidelinesForStudents_WithCOVER.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1fDG_](#)

RUh714abpNNPSDoWBF2nItAeuH44JkMT6PcpPw9pj6Db1_RJ99IY

Question

What is your view of MCPS anti-discrimination policies with respect to LGBTQ students and employees?

3. SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS

Background

On February 4, 2020, the Board of Education’s Committee on Special Populations reviewed its Support for LGBTQ Students Update. This review included discussion of MCPS initiatives for support of LGBTQ Students. [https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BLGMQD5B4A33/\\$file/200204%20LGBTQ%20Students%20Update.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BLGMQD5B4A33/$file/200204%20LGBTQ%20Students%20Update.pdf)

Question

What is your view of the initiatives announced in February 2020?

4. SCHOOL NAMING

Background

In 2018, the Board of Education decided to name the new Rockville Cluster Elementary School after Bayard Rustin, a gay African American civil rights activist who was instrumental to organizing the 1963 March of Washington, which became the platform for Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/publicinfo/Bayard-Rustin.aspx>

Question

What is your view of the naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School?

5. IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH US, PLEASE DO SO.

MITRA ADADPOUR

[No response received.]

STEPHEN AUSTIN

[No response received.]

ANIL CHAUDHRY

[No response received.]

SUNIL DASGUPTA

1. What is your position on the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum?

I support routinely updating MCPS Family Life and Human Sexuality curriculum using the latest research and recommendations and having this information reviewed by a panel that includes representatives from the LGBTQ+ community.

I remain concerned about how best to include gender identity and gender fluidity in the curriculum going forward. While teachers not having a script is in line with my personal philosophy as a college professor, we will need staff training to address new research in this area. Issues about gender identity and gender dysphoria require sensitivity and a willingness to stay updated constantly. We should be cognizant of the difficulties involved and support our teachers.

As a practical matter, we should have a BOE-authorized standing advisory committee that includes LGBTQ+ students, staff, and community members to drive this process, bring to attention the latest research developments, and engage in community outreach. This committee could nest similar cluster and school advisory committees and it should be asked to present annually/biannually to the BOE on progress.

2. What is your view of MCPS anti-discrimination policies with respect to LGBTQ students and employees?

While we have in place formal anti-discrimination policies, community members have reported gaps between policy and practice. This was a point raised at a recent meeting of the LGBTQ Democrats of Montgomery County, where a member reported that someone making homophobic or transphobic comments is not automatically considered to create a hostile workplace unless one can prove that the person making those comments was aware of the presence of a LGBTQ+ person. This is the kind of complaint that needs to be investigated thoroughly and policy language changed to close the gaps.

The BOE should work with LGBTQ+ community members to push this work forward and, as a Board member, I will regularly consult with the community and seek advice on how best to address future issues.

I take seriously the view that we meet every single one of our students where they are. MCPS makes this claim with respect to academics, but I think it is more important to do this socially and culturally. Once our students find that they are accepted for who they are, it will enable academic learning.

3. What is your view of the initiatives announced in February 2020?

The February 2020 announcement from MCPS/BOE, in particular the acceptance of asserted gender identity, is extraordinary as an official statement from any school system. It reflects far-reaching acceptance of evolving gender identity norms and is a wonderful example of where we should aspire to be.

The goals of this document will be hard to achieve financially and culturally, and it will require dogged support from the BOE, MCPS staff, and the community. For example, I imagine gender-neutral facilities will take time to convert/build and during this time we have to make adjustments necessary to create a more welcoming environment for all our students.

I also think we will face challenges with respect to updating our curriculum around gender identity. This is an evolving field with new research out regularly and it will require teachers and staff to remain abreast of developments. It is equally likely to cause friction with those who oppose inclusion. We have to look into developing a process to address these conflicts expeditiously.

4. What is your view of the naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School?

I am proud to have a school name after Bayard Rustin close to my home. His understanding of the powerful effects of economic injustice can be used to help fight all forms of racism, sexism and homophobia. I am aware of the struggle involved in pushing through Rustin's name in the face of opposition, including the central role DC PFLAG played, and I hope the experience of naming Bayard Rustin ES will shape our willingness to elevate other local heroes less celebrated because of dominant cultural prerogatives and to move away from other names that can be problematic.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

I want to see MCPS bring special emphasis on mental health for LGBTQ+ youth. As a group, LGBTQ+ youth experience disproportionate rates of homelessness, and account for up to 40 percent of the homeless youth population.

As a group, LGBTQ+ youth are among the most bullied in our schools. This has to change. I have been thinking if it is feasible to take a designated LGBTQ+ counselor in schools, though I can also see the problem of limiting it this way. Certainly, we should have LGBTQ+ support groups in every middle and high school and I have worked personally to put folks together.

In organizing the Annual Mental Health and Wellness, we have held breakout sessions on LGBTQ+ mental health every year. This year we were fortunate to have MoCo Pride lead the breakout and I thought the panel was successful. I worked with Mark Eckstein early on as he seeded the tremendous LGBTQ+ outreach and training he has been doing with MCPS.

We do need more staff training, parent academies, and other outreach. The outreach is especially important for new immigrant groups who bring with them cultural values opposing LGBTQ+ rights.

Further, our regular curriculum should reflect more closely the lived experience of our students, including LGBTQ+ students. I would like to see community engagement—perhaps

through the advisory committee—to identify books, articles, film, podcasts, etc. for use by teachers. A formal process of referral from the advisory committee to MCPS curriculum review process might smoothen the process for inclusion and pave the way toward belonging.

PAUL GELLER

1. What is your position on the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum?

It is of the utmost importance that all students are provided with content that reflects society as a whole. If mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations provide accurate information that is agreed to by organizations like PFLAG and others regarding their content areas of expertise, then MCPS should incorporate it into their health education curriculum. As always, being a Community Advocate for all our MCPS students for quite some time, if anyone has suggestions to make regarding the curriculum, I would want to hear them, and make sure my Board of Education colleagues do as well. I always want everyone in the community to know I am here for them, will listen, and will not hesitate to pursue an issue.

2. What is your view of MCPS anti-discrimination policies with respect to LGBTQ students and employees?

I unequivocally agree with this MCPS policy that states, “All acts of illegal discrimination are unacceptable and intolerable.” And, as with all MCPS policies, they need to be reviewed and revised as warranted. My concern is, while the policies are well intentioned, what is actually happening in practice. Based on the amount of bias and bigotry I have heard on the campaign trail since January, and all of that heard in my years as a leader in MCCPTA, we have a long way to go. People’s attitudes need to evolve. Everyone is different. We need to accept that the differences are a strength and not a threat. This is a universal challenge not limited to MCPS alone. As a Member of the Board of Education, I want to make sure our anti-discrimination policies are strong in practice, and if anyone can see ways to strengthen them, my door will always be open to their suggestions.

3. What is your view of the initiatives announced in February 2020?

These initiatives are a good start. Can they be strengthened? Absolutely. The challenge remains: what is happening in practice around MCPS. As a Member of the Board of Education, I will be doing everything possible to make sure every member of the MCPS family – students, teachers, staff, administrators, family members, and the greater community feel included, valued, and have their voices heard.

One way I would strengthen these initiatives is through a community outreach project I will work on with MCPS-TV. This program would share the stories of members of the MCPS family who have been discriminated against, bullied, harassed,... The concept is to allow viewers to realize how hurtful these acts are to others, make them rethink their biases, understand we all have feelings, and do our very best to educate the community about the high emotional toll these forms of hatred cost victims. We need to hold a mirror up to the community at large and get people to think about their actions and the consequences.

4. What is your view of the naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School?

I agree with the naming of a school after Bayard Rustin. He certainly was instrumental in both Gay Rights and the 1963 March on Washington. While I may not agree with his politics, and who agrees with everyone 100% of the time anyway, there is no denying he helped countless people by his bravery at advocating for Gay Rights for many years.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Several years ago one of my best friends since grade school visited me and my wife. Afterward, as he was about to leave, he said he had something to tell me. He was gay. I gave him a big hug - partly because I felt terrible trying to fix him up during high school with classmates who were of the opposite sex, and mostly because he felt he had to keep this a secret from me for so long. Afterward he told me he was not sure how I was going to react. I can only imagine this is a similar feeling everyone who is LGBT+ experiences. It was my good fortune to grow up in a household of acceptance. Our family had friends in just about every community possible. This included the gay community. Several times family friends would share their stories about the difficulty of being gay or lesbian (the two communities I was familiar with at the time). I do not want any members of the MCPS family to have anything except positive experiences in our schools. These are public schools and they belong to us all. Everyone should feel welcome, be treated with respect, and their voices should be heard. If not, I want to know about it. Joining the Board of Education is important to me. I want your vote. No one runs for this job for the minuscule pay. You do it because you believe in the mission. You do it because you believe you can make a major difference in the school system. And you do it to give voice to the quiet, the silent, the voiceless, and those needing advocacy. With your support, I pledge to do everything I can to improve MCPS. As an MCCPTA leader for four years, and as a Community Advocate for the last three, I have devoted myself full-time as an unpaid volunteer to accomplishing a substantial track record of advocacy success for MCPS as a whole, and for individual schools when warranted. I will put my experience to work for all. Thank you for being interested in the MCPS BOE race. And please vote for me, Paul Geller. I will continue to devote my efforts, full-time, to pursuing MCPS excellence as I have done since the fall of 2012.

JAY GUAN

1. What is your position on the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum?

Socio-emotional learning and wellness of all of our students are equally important to academic success. I support the inclusion of this in MCPS's health education curriculum. Furthermore, I support efforts that enable our educators to tailor instruction to the health education needs of our LGBTQ students.

2. What is your view of MCPS anti-discrimination policies with respect to LGBTQ students and employees?

I think MCPS's anti-discrimination policies have been very progressive. However, I would like to see more details on its enforcement and implementation of these guidelines and policies, their reporting mechanisms, and accountability. Furthermore, I would like to see the Office of Student and Family Engagement dedicate at least one Parent Community Coordinator to serve our LGBTQ students.

3. What is your view of the initiatives announced in February 2020?

The initiative is certainly a comprehensive and all-around effort. As we move forward with this, we should ensure that its implementation is even across all schools within MCPS. As stated in the answer to the last question, I think we need a dedicated Parent Community Coordinator or other personnel to work in conjunction with the Equity Office to ensure the initiative will “hit the ground” as intended. While we are likely to face fiscal challenges in the next couple of years, we must commit to funding this initiative as well. Lastly, we also need to have more extensive engagement with immigrant families on these issues. The conversation around gender identity and LGBTQ can be an unfamiliar and awkward conversation for many immigrant families. MCPS needs to support them in that process.

4. What is your view of the naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School?

I think this naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School is a great step forward. Representation matters.

Our students need positive role models that reflect their identity. Bayard Rustin’s life and achievements will serve as a great model and show our LGBTQ students that they are accepted. It provides a sense of normalcy and belonging.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

[None]

LYNNE HARRIS

1. What is your position on the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum?

As a nurse and public health practitioner, I know it is imperative that all health information and data MCPS shares with students be absolutely current, accurate, up-to-date and fully inclusive. Using the best available objective information, like that from the APA, is mission critical and must be non-negotiable. MCPS has a way to go to ensure that our Health curricula is keeping pace, particularly in the areas of sexual health, gender identity, and mental wellness. The Board of Education must require an annual review of the Health Education curricula at each grade level to ensure that it is inclusive, accurate, up-to-date and welcoming. Teachers must also have a wide array of objective resources to use to tailor their teaching to the special needs of each particular group of students – but the basic curriculum – fully inclusive, accurate, objective – can never be optional.

2. What is your view of MCPS anti-discrimination policies with respect to LGBTQ students and employees?

One of the things I am proudest of from my 33-month tenure as MCCPTA president is the way in which we intentionally elevated the work to support our LGBTQ students and staff. Our LGBTQ subcommittee, led by powerhouse advocate Mark Eckstein, was instrumental in pushing MCPS to completely revise all student and staff guides, codes of conduct, policies, and rights and responsibilities to fully and explicitly include protections for LGBTQ individuals in our school communities. I am particularly proud of the Guidelines Regarding Student Gender Identity Matters.

I think MCPS' policies are good, but they need real, legal teeth. Our vigilance and authenticity in implementation, and the sensitivity with which we engage students, and provide truly safe spaces to share experiences and report discrimination and bullying, is variable school-to-school. We have to be far less bureaucratic, and far more directly and timely responsive to student concerns. Mechanisms for student reporting that are safely anonymous must be widely shared, and must provide real-time feedback and action steps. Working comprehensively throughout all 208 schools to make each truly trauma-informed with an intentional wellness focus must be professionally handled, and truly prioritized by MCPS. The primary reason I am running is because of my deep belief that we must create a school system in which every student, every day, in every school, feels safe, welcome and valued for being exactly who they are.

3. What is your view of the initiatives announced in February 2020?

I strongly support every single one, but the Board of Education must provide focused, ongoing oversight to ensure that all of these initiatives are being implemented with consistency and fidelity throughout every one of our 208 schools. Too many times MCPS is 208 fiefdoms instead of a system. This can NOT be one of those times. Finally MCPS needs to fully embrace solid legal protections, not just policies, with real teeth to ensure true enforcement.

4. What is your view of the naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School?

Completely and wholeheartedly support the naming of the 5th elementary school in the RM cluster after an African American civil rights leader whose identification as a gay man in the early 1960s meant that he never received the credit he deserved for his essential work in the Civil Rights movement. About bloody time.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

I want to again note how very proud I am of the work MCCPTA has done, particularly over the past 22 months, to work with MCPS to fully support our LGBTQ students and staff. I believe MCCPTA's focused and ongoing engagement with MCPS, and partnership with important community partners like PFLAG, was instrumental in much of the recent progress MCPS has made in its work on diversity and inclusion, including:

- Continually pushing for fully inclusive curricula
- Continually advocating for the maximum reduction in data-collection based on gender, and incorporation of gender-neutral identifiers when that data is required
- MCPS, along with MCCPTA, full participation in community events like Rockville Pride and Pride Prom
- The first annual MCCPTA/MCPS LGBTQ forum in April 2019
- Complete review/revision of all MCPS manuals, policies and procedures with LGBTQ students and other advocates
- Continued work with MCPS to promote gender inclusive athletic culture
- Continued work with MCPS to create truly safe gender neutral bathrooms
- MCCPTA Financial support for students to attend Thrive

- Support for creation of MoCo Pride – umbrella organization for MS and HS LGBTQ clubs – which are now in 90% of those schools
- MCCPTA was a primary force in getting OCIP to work with students to create an LGBTQ Studies elective – making MCPS one of the first school systems in the country to do so when it goes live in the 2020-21 school year

BUT – there is work to do on equity and fidelity of implementation as noted earlier. Our PPWs and PCCs are a bit of a weak link – we need to ensure they have solid Professional Development in supporting LGBTQ students, especially those for whom home is not necessarily a safe space. Along those lines, there are real concerns, particularly during the evolving Covid19 response, about how we are connecting with and supporting our LGBTQ students who are homeless --- since data suggests that demographic accounts for 40% of our housing insecure student population.

COLLINS ODONGO

[No response received.]

DALBIN OSORIO

1. What is your position on the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum?

For starters, I do not believe that the Family Life and Human Sexuality Curriculum should be an opt-in part of the curriculum, and instead should be a mandated part of it and expanded to be woven into our MCPS curriculum. When we talk about culturally-competent curriculum and culturally-relevant instruction, that HAS to include LGBTQ+ staff with lived experience and actual curriculum. To more directly answer the question, I support the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum, and believe we would be wise to invest in our teachers so they can have more input into what material is engaging our students consistently.

2. What is your view of MCPS anti-discrimination policies with respect to LGBTQ students and employees?

I support MCPS anti-discrimination policies as they are currently written, and would like to create a way to measure whether schools are actively and consistently meeting these requirements. How are we recruiting LGBTQ+ staff? Are we promoting LGBTQ+ staff to leadership positions? Are we investing in their professional development at the same rate as their cisgender peers? In order to really measure if we are an inclusionary school system, we have to make sure we are constantly evolving to serve an ever-changing county.

3. What is your view of the initiatives announced in February 2020?

I really liked the initiatives announced, and believe that we should aim to make every initiative a part of our everyday school life. When I was a school therapist, one thing i'd

constantly hear from my students is how they oftentimes felt singled out for their sexuality because days of inclusion would essentially put them front and center over something they may still struggle with. We should include LGBTQ+ students and staff in the planning and implementation of these initiatives, and in any more initiatives we work to implement, to ensure we are honoring their lived experience and being as inclusionary as we can be.

4. What is your view of the naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School?

I love this and believe we should do more to highlight LGBTQ+ activists, whether its naming intersections or sports fields or parks. Our students should feel represented everywhere in the County.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

I have taught LGBTQ+ students, and ensured that their classroom is a safe place for them to learn and develop through positive socioemotional interactions. I've trained organizations on being LGBTQ+ competent and inclusive. As a social worker, i've ensured that foster parents are trained to create safe environments for LGBTQ+ foster care youth who have been through extensive traume. I have managed programs and supervised diverse staffs, including but not limited to LGBTQ+ staff. I've done this work since I was 20 years old, because it is the right thing to do, and everybody deserves the opportunity to learn, work, and contribute to the community they support no matter what gender they are. As a member of the Board, I will work with the Board to ensure that our students receive that opportunity. It is also on us to ensure that our staff can develop in a safe environment, and my commitment is to the principles we hold dear: every child, every family, every teacher, every principal matters.

CAMERON RHODE

1. What is your position on the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum?

As a scientist (M.P.S. Biotechnology, 2018), I firmly believe schools' health curricula should be comprehensive and accurate. I'm proud to have earned the 100% Pro-Choice Rating from NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland, in part for my commitment to maintaining high-quality health education that is inclusive of LGBTQ experiences.

2. What is your view of MCPS anti-discrimination policies with respect to LGBTQ students and employees?

I strongly support anti-discrimination policies that cover ethnicity, country of origin, language(s) spoken, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. MCPS documents as recent as 2017 have inaccurate or incomplete language regarding LGBTQ community members.

examples:

The 2017 Memorandum of Understanding among MCPS and law enforcement

agencies

uses inaccurate language on sexual orientation and gender identity (see section H).
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/securitynew/Execute

d

%20SRO%20MOU.PDF

The current contract between the Board of Education and the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) includes gender in its anti-discrimination clauses, but it does not specify “identity” and “expression”.

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/associationrelations

/

MCEA_Contract.pdf

If elected to the Board of Education, I will work to improve such language across MCPS documents.

3. What is your view of the initiatives announced in February 2020?

I attended the February 4th, 2020 meeting at which these initiatives were discussed. While these measures will greatly help LGBTQ community members, there will still be significant work to be done.

LGBTQ students have reported that their concerns are often dismissed by in-school administrators and that sometimes they won't see changes unless teachers stand with them. If elected, I will focus on making sure school administration is accommodating of LGBTQ students' and teachers' needs.

4. What is your view of the naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School?

As a card-carrying NAACP member, I was delighted when the school was named for Bayard Rustin.

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

I have been volunteering politically for 12 years and, since coming out as bisexual in 2013, have been heavily involved in LGBT issues at UMBC and at the state and local levels. I am a recent graduate of Montgomery County Public Schools, so I know our successes and challenges firsthand. My candidacy is endorsed by Delegates Kumar Barve and Jim Gilchrist and former delegate Andrew Platt.

Through volunteering on local, state, and national campaigns, I've enjoyed countless conversations with voters across Montgomery County about education issues. When you sit on a stranger's porch for 15 or 30 minutes, you get to hear their thoughts about issues that affect them personally — issues that don't grab headlines but that are just as important as those that do. I bring a thoughtful, open-minded approach of fully taking in and evaluating stakeholders' concerns. I look forward to hearing from you!

DARWIN ROMERO

[No response received.]

PAVEL SUKHOBOK

[No response received.]

LUMPOANGE THOMAS

1. What is your position on the inclusion of information from mainstream American medical and mental health professional associations in the MCPS health education curriculum?

[No response]

2. What is your view of MCPS anti-discrimination policies with respect to LGBTQ students and employees?

[No response]

3. What is your view of the initiatives announced in February 2020?

[No response]

4. What is your view of the naming of Bayard Rustin Elementary School?

[No response]

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

My apologies for not timely responding to the questionnaire. I have been behind the 8 ball with campaign activities, due to current volunteer responsibilities. Although, all my volunteer positions will end this summer.

I am currently the President of my son’s HS All School Booster Club, which has kept me busy. I was also a parent volunteer for the HS swim and dive season that wrapped up a couple weeks ago, and now in it’s place, our summer swim team season planning began in February. I am sharing this with you not for sympathy. However, I wanted to share so that you would know that I simply did not disregard this questionnaire.

I will tell you that I am deeply committed to the educational success of all our students. I will ensure that the health of every individual student is met not just academically, but mentally, and emotionally. We need to address the well-being of the whole-child.

What will I do specifically for the LGBTQ students who identify as such? I will ensure that every single student within this group receives all the support needed for their success. I would collaborate with individuals such as yourself, to ask for guidance as to how best serve LGBTQ students.

I have two nieces whom I love dearly, that are members of this community. One of my niece’s married her partner last year and now they’re expecting their first child. I’ve become quite protective over them. And selfishly, I don’t want my great-niece to have to endure any discrimination due to having two mothers. I don’t want my nieces to have to face any discrimination for not having the traditional nuclear family structure. Therefore, in order to ensure a society that is fully accepting of everyone, we need to take proactive measures now by implementing and teaching our children that we all are uniquely individual. We need to

change any policy that discriminates in any manner. We need to become a fully inclusive society.

Again, I apologize for not responding to the questionnaire.

Thank you though, for the opportunity to participate.